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DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION: DESERTIFICATION AND DROUGHT

Report of the Second Committee (Part VIII)*

Rapporteur: Ms. Irene FREUDENSCHUSS-REICHL (Austria)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Second Committee held a substantive debate on agenda item 91 (see A/48/717, para. 2). Action to be taken on sub-item (f) was considered at the 42nd and 45th meetings, on 29 November and 6 December 1993. An account of the Committee's consideration of the item is contained in the relevant summary records (A/C.2/48/SR.42 and 45).

II. CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT RESOLUTIONS A/C.2/48/L.45 AND L.66

2. At the 42nd meeting, on 29 November, the representative of Colombia, on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China, introduced a draft resolution entitled "Drought and desertification" (A/C.2/48/L.45), which read as follows:

"The General Assembly,

"Recalling its resolution 32/172 of 19 December 1977, in which it approved the report of the United Nations Conference on Desertification, 1/

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* The report on this agenda item will be issued in several parts under the symbol A/48/717 and addenda.

1/ A/CONF.74/36.

containing the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification, 2/ and its subsequent resolutions on the subject,

"Recalling also the decisions of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, set forth in chapter 12, entitled "Managing fragile ecosystems: combating desertification and drought", of Agenda 21, 3/ which develop and complete the decisions of the Plan of Action,

"Concerned by the worldwide continued degradation of soil resources, particularly in Africa,

"Noting that in the long term the problem of drought, desertification and the degradation of the productive capacity of the soil has serious worldwide economic and social consequences that threaten the security and well-being of all countries,

"Welcoming the ongoing negotiations to elaborate an international convention to combat desertification in those countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification, particularly in Africa,

"Noting the active role played by the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office in combating drought and the important contribution of the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office to African countries in the ongoing process of negotiating an international convention to combat desertification,

"Taking note of the recommendation contained in paragraph 38.27 of Agenda 21 and of decision 93/33 of the Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme, in which the Council encouraged the Administrator to strengthen the substantive role and maintain the identity of the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office as focal point within the United Nations Development Programme for all matters related to drought and desertification control,

"Recalling the appeals to the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Environment Programme to continue and strengthen their cooperation in combating desertification, notably through the joint venture programme's support to the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office,

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2/ Ibid., part one, chap. I.

3/ Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992, vol. I, Resolutions adopted by the Conference (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex II.

"Having examined the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the Plan of Action and of the medium-term recovery and rehabilitation programme in the Sudano-Sahelian region, 4/

"1. Urges the international community to increase its financial technical and material support to countries most affected by drought and desertification in order to support their effort to translate the decisions of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development into concrete activities to implement the programmes outlines in chapter 12 of Agenda 21;

"2. Takes note with satisfaction of decision 93/33 of the Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme, in which the Council decided that the experience and technical expertise of the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office in drought and desertification control should be made available to all affected countries, in particular those in Africa;

"3. Recommends that the cooperation between the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Environment Programme ensured by the joint agreement to support the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office in the implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification in the Sudano-Sahelian region be strengthened and enlarged in the context of implementing Agenda 21 but without prejudice to the particular attention that must be paid to the countries of the Sudano-Sahelian region;

"4. Appeals to donor countries to contribute to the United Nations fund for the Sudano-Sahelian region to allow it to continue to bring effective assistance to African countries within the framework of the negotiation process for an international convention to combat desertification and to assist the affected countries in implementing chapter 12 of Agenda 21;

"5. Appeals urgently to the members of the international community, particularly donor countries, to support the effort being exerted to combat drought and desertification on subregional levels, inter alia, within subregional intergovernmental organizations such as the Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development, the Permanent Inter-State Committee to Combat Drought in the Sahel, the Southern African Development Community and the Arab Maghreb Union;

"6. Requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fiftieth session on the implementation of the present resolution."

3. At the 45th meeting, on 6 December, the Vice-Chairman of the Committee, Mr. Leandro Arellano (Mexico) introduced a draft resolution (A/C.2/48/L.66) submitted on the basis of informal consultations on draft resolution A/C.2/48/L.45, and orally revised, the English text only, as follows:

4/ A/48/216.

(a) At the beginning of operative paragraph 5, before the words "members of the international community", the word "affected" was deleted;

(b) In operative paragraph 5, before the words "subregional levels", the word "affected" was inserted.

4. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.2/48/L.66, as orally revised in the English text only, without a vote (see para. 6).

5. In the light of the adoption of draft resolution A/C.2/48/L.66, draft resolution A/C.2/48/L.45 was withdrawn by the sponsors.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SECOND COMMITTEE

6. The Second Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Drought and desertification

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 32/172 of 19 December 1977, by which it approved the report of the United Nations Conference on Desertification, 5/ containing the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification, 6/ and its subsequent resolutions on the subject,

Recalling also the decisions of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development set forth in chapter 12, entitled "Managing fragile ecosystems: combating desertification and drought", of Agenda 21, 7/ which develop and complete the decisions of the Plan of Action,

Concerned about the continued world-wide degradation of soil resources, particularly in Africa,

Noting that in the long term the problems of drought, desertification and degradation of the productive capacity of the soil has serious world-wide economic and social consequences that threaten the security and well-being of all affected countries,

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5/ A/CONF.74/36.

6/ Ibid., part one, chap. I.

7/ Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992, vol. I, Resolutions adopted by the Conference (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex II.

Stressing the importance of the ongoing negotiations to elaborate an international convention to combat desertification in those countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification, particularly in Africa,

Noting the active role played by the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office in combating drought and the important contribution of the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office to African countries in the ongoing process of negotiating an international convention to combat desertification,

Taking note of the recommendation contained in paragraph 38.27 of Agenda 21 and of decision 93/33 of 18 June 1993 of the Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme, 8/ in which the Council encouraged the Administrator to strengthen the substantive role and maintain the identity of the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office as the focal point within the United Nations Development Programme for all matters related to drought and desertification control, in particular those in Africa, in accordance with the ongoing process of integrating the Office into the core programme of the United Nations Development Programme,

Recalling the appeals to the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Environment Programme to continue and strengthen their cooperation in combating desertification, notably through the support for the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office by the joint venture programme,

Having examined the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification and of the medium-term recovery and rehabilitation programme in the Sudano-Sahelian region, 9/

1. Welcomes the support of the international community and urges it to continue its financial, technical and material support to the countries most affected by drought and desertification in order to support their effort to translate the decisions of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development into concrete activities to implement the programmes outlined in chapter 12 of Agenda 21, duly taking into account the provisions of the future international convention to combat desertification in those countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification, particularly in Africa;

2. Takes note with satisfaction of decision 93/33 of the Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme, in which the Council decided that the experience and technical expertise of the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office in drought and desertification control should be made available to all affected countries, in particular those in Africa;

3. Recommends that the cooperation between the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Environment Programme ensured by the joint

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8/ Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1993, Supplement No. 15 (E/1993/35).

9/ A/48/216.

agreement to support the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office in the implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification in the Sudano-Sahelian region, in a manner consistent with the outcome of the future convention, be strengthened and enlarged in the context of implementing Agenda 21, but without prejudice to the particular attention that must be paid to the countries of the Sudano-Sahelian region;

4. Appeals to donor countries to contribute to the United Nations fund for the Sudano-Sahelian region to allow it to continue to bring effective assistance to African countries within the framework of the negotiation process for an international convention to combat desertification and to assist the affected countries in implementing chapter 12 of Agenda 21;

5. Appeals urgently to the members of the international community, particularly donor countries, to support the effort being exerted to combat drought and desertification on affected subregional levels, inter alia, within subregional intergovernmental organizations, such as the Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development, the Permanent Inter-State Committee to Combat Drought in the Sahel, the Southern African Development Community and the Arab Maghreb Union, as well as within the programmes, funds and relevant agencies of the United Nations system, including the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Development Programme;

6. Requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fiftieth session on the implementation of the present resolution.